ABBA®

GOLD

GREATEST HITS

ALSO AVAILABLE THE ALBUMS

RING RING

WATERLOO

ABBA

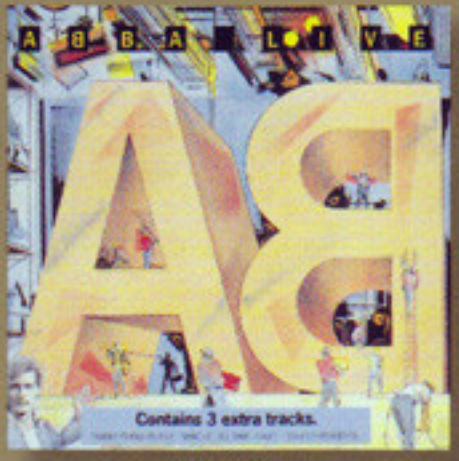
ARRIVAL

THE ALBUM

VOULEZ-VOUS

SUPER TROUPER

THE VISITORS



ABBA LIVE

1.	DANCING QUEEN	℗ 1976	3:51
2.	KNOWING ME, KNOWING YOU	℗ 1977	4:01
3.	TAKE A CHANCE ON ME	℗ 1978	4:04
4.	MAMMA MIA	℗ 1975	3:32
5.	LAY ALL YOUR LOVE ON ME	℗ 1980	4:34
6.	SUPER TROUPER	℗ 1980	4:12
7.	I HAVE A DREAM	℗ 1979	4:42
8.	THE WINNER TAKES IT ALL	℗ 1980	4:54
9.	MONEY, MONEY, MONEY	℗ 1976	3:06
10.	S.O.S.	℗ 1975	3:20
11.	CHIQUITITA	℗ 1979	5:24
12.	FERNANDO	℗ 1976	4:13
13.	VOULEZ VOUS	℗ 1979	5:09
14.	GIMME! GIMME! GIMME! (A MAN AFTER MIDNIGHT)	℗ 1979	4:50
15.	DOES YOUR MOTHER KNOW	℗ 1979	3:13
16.	ONE OF US	℗ 1981	3:55
17.	THE NAME OF THE GAME	℗ 1977	4:51
18.	THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC	℗ 1983	3:49
19.	WATERLOO	℗ 1974	2:48

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Whereas Waterloo as a concept once used to symbolize defeat, certain events taking place in Brighton, England on 6th April 1974 seemed to give it a slightly different meaning. It was on that day that ABBA not only achieved their victory in the Eurovision Song Contest, but also started a victorious career around the globe, which was to make them one of the largest-selling acts ever in the history of popular music. In addition, this marked the first time that a pop group from Sweden made any lasting impact on the international music scene.

For it was from Sweden they hailed: Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson were barely out of their teens when they met in the early summer of 1966 (Benny was still only 19). At that time, Björn was a member of the Hootenanny Singers, a very popular folk music group, while Benny was a member of Sweden's biggest pop group of the 1960s, the Hep Stars.

This initial meeting soon led to their first songwriting collaboration, and by the end of the decade they had established a regular partnership as composers, Benny having left the Hep Stars, and the Hootennany Singers virtually existing only in the recording studio. The Hootenanny Singers released their records on the Polar record label, owned by the dynamic Stig Anderson, who was to become ABBA's manager. Stig recognized the talents of Björn and Benny as songwriters and producers, assuring them that they would eventually conquer the world, in the meantime hiring them as house producers from the autumn of 1971 onwards.

By that time, Björn and Benny had already met what was to become the other half of ABBA. Agnetha Fältskog had been a successful solo singer, recording her first single in October 1967. In May 1969, she met and fell in love with Björn when the two of them appeared in the same TV special, and in July 1971 the couple got married.

Anni-Frid Lyngstad, also known as Frida, started her recording career only one month before Agnetha. Frida was actually of Norwegian origin, but had moved to Sweden at a very early age. She met Benny when the two of them were performing in the same town in March 1969. They soon got engaged, but did not marry until October 1978.

From 1970 onwards, the four future ABBA members were often heard guesting on the recordings they each made as solo or duo acts, especially when backing vocals were needed. The attractive sound of their four voices combined gave them the idea to put together the cabaret act Festfolk (which had the double meaning "engaged couples" and "party people"). This first attempt failed, but in the spring of

1972 they recorded a song called People Need Love, which gave them a medium-sized hit in Sweden. At this time they called themselves Björn & Benny, Agnetha & Anni-Frid.

Encouraged by this success, they entered the 1973 Swedish selections for the Eurovision Song Contest with the song Ring Ring. They finished third, but the song and the album of the same name became huge sales successes in Sweden. The group entered the selections again in 1974, this time with Waterloo, which took them all the way to the finals in Brighton, England. By this time they had changed their name to ABBA, an acronym of their first names. ABBA was also the name of a Swedish canned fish company, which luckily agreed to lending their name to a pop group.

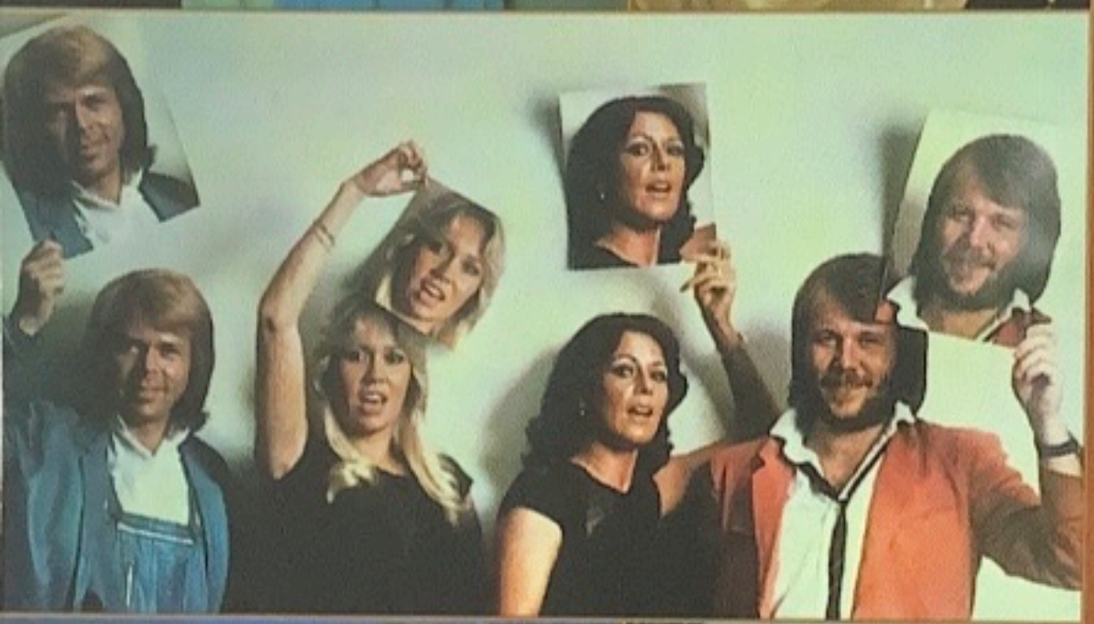
Soon after ABBA's Eurovision Song Contest triumph, Waterloo was #1 on the charts in England, Ireland, West Germany, Norway and Belgium, and even reached the US Top Ten. The album of the same name made less impact in most countries, but was hugely successful in Sweden.

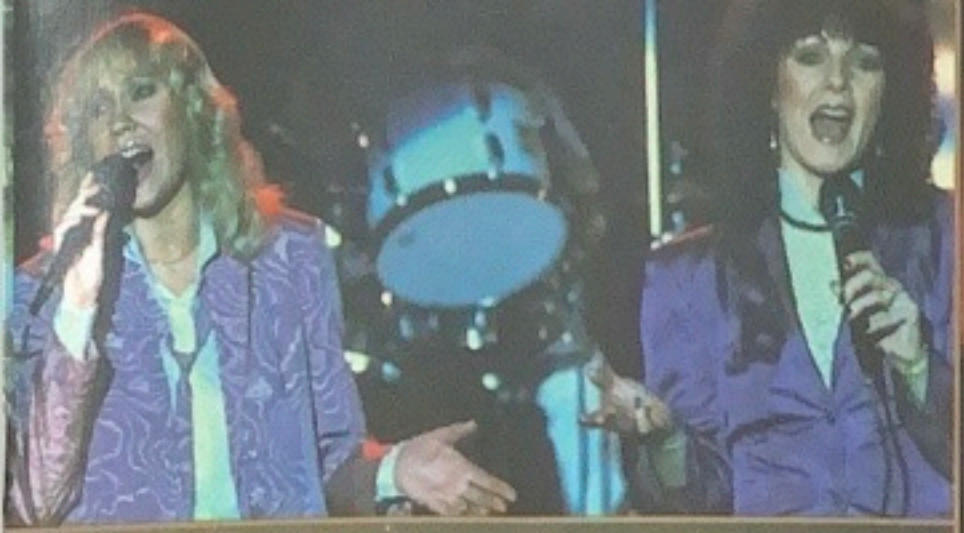
However, attached with the stigma of being winners of the Eurovision Song Contest, ABBA found it difficult to be taken seriously when they tried to follow this first success. It was not until some 18 months later that they got a major worldwide hit again with SOS, taken off their third album, simply titled ABBA. SOS reached #15 in the US, and was a Top Five or Top Ten hit in several other countries. In the UK, it was the first of 18 consecutive Top Ten hits.

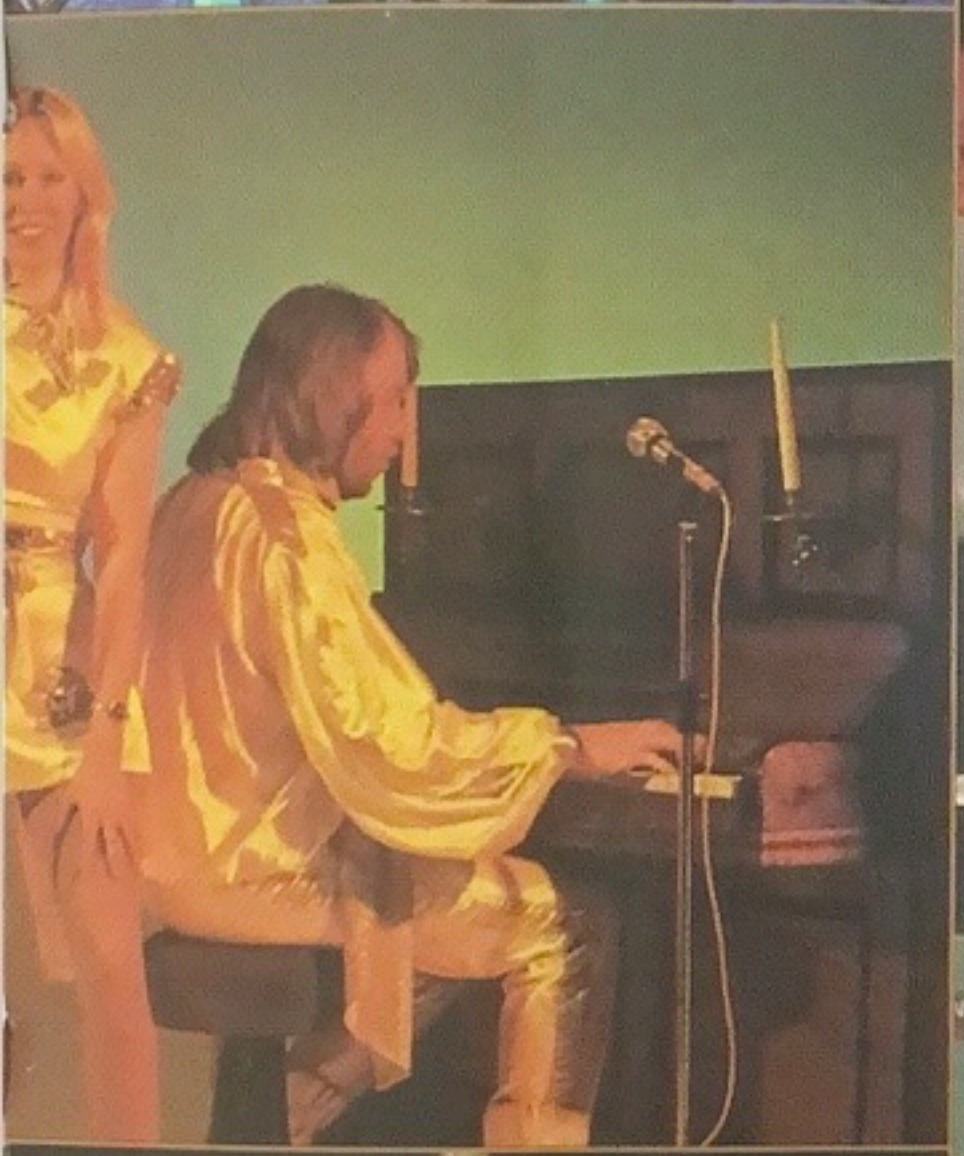
Mamma Mia, also taken from ABBA, returned the group to the UK #1 spot, which they was to occupy a total of nine times between 1974 and 1980. Mamma Mia was also a #1 hit in Australia, which was the first territory to release it as a single in August 1975. Over the next few years, Australia would be caught up in a virtual ABBA fever, giving the group a total of six #1 hits.

While SOS and Mamma Mia were climbing up charts all over the world, ABBA themselves were already busy recording their next two singles. Fernando started life as a Swedish-language song for a solo album by Frida, but its hit potential meant that an English version by ABBA was released as a single in the spring of 1976. It became one of the group's biggest hits ever, reaching #1 in the UK, Ireland, Australia, West Germany, The Netherlands, New Zealand and Belgium.

The second song was Dancing Queen, released as the first single off ABBA's 1976 Arrival album, and performed at a televised gala tribute the day before the marriage between Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen







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Silvia in June 1976. Even more successful than Fernando, Dancing Queen reached the top on almost every chart it entered - it was ABBA's only US #1.

Two further singles were released from Arrival: Money, Money, Money in the autumn of 1976, and in March 1977 Knowing Me, Knowing You, which spent five weeks at the top of the UK charts. In February and March 1977 ABBA embarked on their first major tour, taking place in Europe and Australia. Perhaps the success of this tour is best illustrated by the millions of ticket applications that were received for the two concerts at London's comparatively tiny Royal Albert Hall.

During the tour, scenes were also filmed for the feature film ABBA - The Movie, which received its world premiere in December 1977. At the same time the new, similarly titled LP ABBA - The Album was released. It had been preceded by the single The Name Of The Game in October, a UK and Belgium #1 and a Top Three hit in Sweden, Norway, and The Netherlands.

The second single from the new album was Take A Chance On Me, a #1 hit in the UK and Belgium, and ABBA's second most successful single in the US, where it reached Number Three. This was partly a result of a major promotional campaign in the United States during the spring of 1978, including an appearance on an Olivia Newton-John TV special.

Even before the US visit, ABBA had already started recording their next album. The first single to be released off this album was Chiquitita, premiered at an all-star UNICEF gala in New York in January 1979. While Benny and Frida had got married only a few months previously, the release of the Chiquitita single happened to coincide with the sad news that Björn and Agnetha had decided to get a divorce. As they both were quick to point out, this did not mean the end of ABBA, although certainly in the eyes of the world, a crack appeared in the image of two happy couples united to create glorious pop music.

The new album, Voulez-Vous, was released at the end of April 1979, almost simultaneously with Does Your Mother Know, the last single to feature Björn as lead vocalist. The next single, the disco-flavoured title track off the new album, was released in the summer. Voulez-Vous (the song) had been written in the Bahamas, and was recorded in Criteria Studios, Miami, USA - the only of ABBA's songs not to be recorded in Stockholm, Sweden.

ABBA's next single was also a disco track, but was a brand new recording. Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight) was released to coincide with a tour of Canada, the

United States and Europe in the autumn of 1979. The single was a Top Three hit in Norway, the UK, Ireland, West Germany, The Netherlands, and Belgium.

For ABBA's last single of 1979, they returned to the Voulez-Vous album and released the peace anthem I Have A Dream in December. This decision rewarded them with #1 hits in Ireland and The Netherlands, and a #2 peak position on the UK chart.

In March 1980, ABBA took their 1979 tour line-up to Japan for what turned out to be their very last live concerts. By this time, they had already started recording their next album, although it would take until July before the first single was released. The lyrics for The Winner Takes It All was coloured by Björn's and Agnetha's divorce, and the song certainly seemed to capture the imagination of a great number of pop music fans - the single reached #1 in the UK, Ireland, Belgium, and The Netherlands.

The next single, Super Trouper, was released as the lead-off single from the album of the same name in November 1980, becoming ABBA's last UK #1, and also reaching the top position in West Germany, The Netherlands and Belgium.

However, only a few months later the final blow was dealt to ABBA's happy-couples image of the 1970s, for in February 1981, Benny and Frida announced their divorce. As in the case of Björn's and Agnetha's divorce, it was maintained that Benny's and Frida's marital split did not affect their work with ABBA, and the group soon set out to work on their next album.

While the world was waiting for brand new ABBA recordings, a final track from the Super Trouper album received a somewhat limited release as a 12" single. Lay All Your Love On Me, released in the summer of 1981, was certainly one of ABBA's best dance tracks, and by reaching the Number Seven position on the UK charts, it became the highest placing of a song exclusively released as a 12" single up to that time.

The first single to be released from sessions for the new album was One Of Us, which reached record shops almost simultaneously with the album The Visitors in December 1981. As usual, both album and single soon conquered the charts all over Europe, with One Of Us being the last of ABBA's nine #1 singles in West Germany.

1982 turned out to be ABBA's final year together, and it was a period marked by the individual members starting to branch out into separate projects. Significantly enough, the year started with Frida recording her first solo album since 1975, produced by Phil Collins. When ABBA reconvened in the recording studio in May, it was with the view to record a new studio album. Those plans were soon whittled

down to the decision of releasing a double-album of their singles with two new tracks included, and all in all only six new songs were recorded during 1982.

By the end of the year, it had been decided that ABBA would take a break, so that Björn and Benny could collaborate with Tim Rice on the musical Chess. Meanwhile, Agnetha followed Frida's lead and recorded a solo album of her own. To plug the gap while no new ABBA releases were forthcoming, a few countries released the ABBA - The Album track Thank You For The Music as a single in 1983. This song - taken from ABBA's mini-musical The Girl With The Golden Hair, performed during their 1977 tour - had up to this point primarily been used as a B-side on single releases. In effect, one of the most well-known ABBA songs never really got the chance to become a worldwide hit while the group still existed.

It was not long before it was clear that ABBA's "temporary" break was in fact a permanent one. While Björn and Benny went on to write another musical, the Swedish-language Kristina från Duvemåla ("Kristina From Duvemåla", premiered in 1995), Frida's last international album release was Shine in 1984, although 1996 saw her return with a new album for the Swedish market. Agnetha recorded two further solo albums, the last of which was I Stand Alone, released in 1987. She has yet to reappear on the music scene.

Meanwhile, with the release in 1992 of the ABBA Gold album, interest in the group and its music was reawakened all over the world. Indeed, part of the success of the album was bringing ABBA's music to a new generation of fans, affectionately termed "goldies" in certain fan-circles. Now re-released in 24 bit remastered form, this improved edition of ABBA Gold should be able to send even more pop music lovers into the welcoming arms of ABBA music.

Carl Magnus Palm, 1999

Carl Magnus Palm is the author of ABBA - The Complete Recording Sessions.

This compilation Chris Griffin, Jackie Stansfield, George McManus, John Tobler & Ingemar Bergman. Original design by Icon.
Repackaged in the Playground.

For more information on ABBA send a S.A.E. to: Agnetha, Benny, Björn, Frida Fan Club. PO Box 3079, 4700 AB Roosendaal, Holland.

Abba Official Website: www.abbasite.com

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